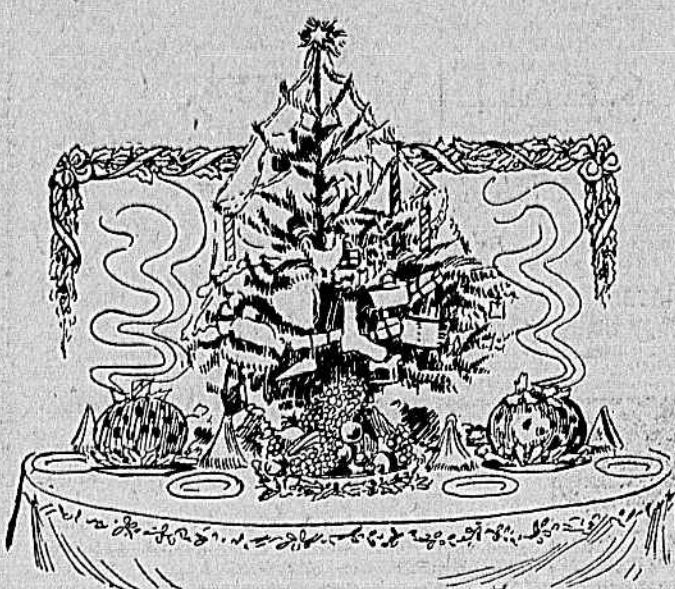


Page for Women About Fashions and Home



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

Let the centerpiece of the Christmas dinner table be a small fir tree surrounded by a Christmas star, and brilliantly illuminated with red wax tapers. It should be laden with simple gifts for all present and draped with gilt tinsel. A mound of fruits at the base will hide the box, in which it has to be inserted to hold it firm.

Fold the napkins and tie them with red and green ribbons, placing a small sprig of holly in each where the ribbon is caught. Suspend from the chandelier a bunch of mistletoe tied with broad red ribbons. Have the plum pudding served with a holly spray bedecking it, and serve pistache cream in miniature flower pots holding lighted Christmas trees.

THE CHRISTMAS TABLE.

The Christmas Dinner a Notable Celebration in Many Lands—Southern Christmas Bill of Fare Represents Old English Ideas in Tidewater Virginia.

Around the Christmas dinner table in Tidewater Virginia lingers a survival of the sentiment and feeling that began with the first Christmas spent on the shores of the Old Dominion at Jamestown; feeling and sentiment that afterward for many years rendered the dispensing of Christmas hospitality in the good cheer around the Christmas board, a thing of beauty and of open-handed, free-handed good will that rendered its celebration something fine and picturesque, a memory to linger and to be cherished in the hearts of those with whom Christmas never degenerates into a thing devoid of the general exercise of joy in giving and in loving that is its central idea.

The Virginia Christmas dinner after the manner of its English predecessor, is a family affair and is eaten at home. Around the long table with a gift-laden Christmas tree as its center ornament, gathered at this season the scattered members of the household, who come from far and near to cement once again the bonds of family affection in the recurrence of family union. Cares and anxieties are for the time being laid aside. Smiles and jest, wit and raillery, mark the passing of the hour. From the moment that the Christmas board is blessed and the feast begins, to that time when the last toast is drunk and feeling overflows in the words—

"Come make the most of Christmas Day;
Old times are on the wane,
The curtain rings down on the play,
Twill soon be Christmas past.
Then give the gift of free good-will;
It never comes amiss.
For all the world would be a peace
With such a boon as this—"

every moment forges a fresh link in a chain that links time with eternity, and earth with heaven in the minds of fathers and mothers, children and grandchildren. The Christmas feast board is an institution which brings into play whatever is best and kindest and noblest in the heart of humanity, and it deserves all the care and thought that the Virginia housewife has long been accustomed to bestow upon it.

In many lands, indeed, the Christmas dinner has come to be a notable feature in the celebration of a world-wide holiday. Wherever the Englishman, American or German may be, and whatever else may be lacking in surroundings to bring back the idea of home, there is always an effort—sometimes it is true a crude one—but nevertheless an effort, to have a Christmas dinner. The mountaineers in their valleys, the cowboys on the plains, the sailors out at sea, and the soldiers in their barracks, find in the imitation, or the real thing, some alleviation for the "homesickness," which thoughts of the season bring to those who are far from that haven of rest on Christmas Day.

The Christmas feast in Virginia is spread on Christmas Day. Elsewhere it often comes on Christmas Eve, as in Germany, where the lighting of the Christmas tree is followed by a family dinner and merry-making; as in Russia, where the "colitza," or dinner is served when the evening star rises on Christmas Eve, and where the feast begins with the division of the blessed water, a small portion of which is given to each person present. In Russia, wherever it is possible, the Christmas tree appears resplendent, as in Germany, with tapers, gifts, fruits and confections.

In Holland there is the Christmas Eve procession in which the Magi or Wise Men are symbolized by devout figures carrying an illuminated star supposed to be like that which guided the Magi to Bethlehem. A sumptuous dinner follows the procession.

At the general Italian family gathering on Christmas Eve, all aged and ripe partake of the rich, cold nut cakes, fruits and vegetables which are permissible at this meal called the "magro," where no meat is allowed. The next day capon instead of roast turkey is the "piece de resistance" at the principal Christmas feast, which also includes "pan glorio," a kind of nut and fruit cake.

The Filipino makes quantity, not quality, the essential qualification of his Christmas menu, where chocolates and sweets are required. Vio, Dutch gin, and imported beer enter into the list of his Christmas drinks; hot nut chewing and smoking include a part of the Christmas jollification, which is usually crowned with music and dancing. In Cuba, the natives may sit down to their Christmas table on Christmas Eve, after their return from church, with the doors flung wide to admit the soft June-like breeze and the odors of blossoming flowers that fill the place of the holly and overgrowth of more northern climes. At the Christmas dinner roast pig holds the place of honor, along with turkey, but the one who roasts apple in his mouth, and the

poems have made on the reading public is remarkable—much greater, the author says, "than their literary pretensions could warrant or merit." "Letters have often been written me," Mr. Carleton says in his preface, "by repentant sons and daughters, acknowledging their error of indifference to the parents who had reared and loved them, and stating that repentance had been made as far as possible." The little poem is the rhyming monologue of an old mother, who, being deserted and neglected by all her children, is obliged to take refuge in the poor-house. It lays no special claim to poetic merit, but contains many a touch that finds the heart, and the wide influence it has had on erring sons and daughters is not difficult to understand.

Mr. Eugene Barry's "Poems" (D. C. Page & Co., Boston) deal frequently with nature and out-of-door matters—"The Plains of Laramie," "A Colorado Campfire," "The Prairie Farmer," "The Trapper," etc. Others treat of varied subjects ranging from "The Birth of Twins" to "The Old General at Muster." Mr. Barry's muse is, for the most part, reflective and mildly philosophical. Now and then, however, he does not hesitate to find fault in plain-spoken terms as when he tells us, on page 136, how "The beer-soaked ruffian treats his comrades vile," etc. The "Poems" are in no way noteworthy.

The sentiments inspired in the breast of Mr. Howard V. Southard by the scenes and objects that have caught his eye in his walks through the streets of San Francisco are metrically vocalized in "Songs of a City" (James H. Barry, San Francisco). The volume is divided into three parts—"Songs of a City," "Lyrical Intermezzi," and "Songs of a City, Part II." Neither in originality of conception nor in poetry of expression are Mr. Southard's verses at all remarkable. His choice of subjects, as in "Ferry-boat Francis," "The City," "The City," "The City," etc., will be found at times rather suggestive of Walt Whitman.

Mr. Wallace Irwin, already favorably known as a writer of humorous verse through his "Love Sonnets of a Hoodlum" and "Rubbish of Omar Khayyam, Jr.," will disappoint none of his admirers in the new volume of his work which Dodd, Mead & Co. have just published. The "Nautical Lays of a Landsman" have the true old-timer swing and force. They also show the true old-timer propensity for exaggeration and romanticism, backed up by a rollicking humor, and there is fun galore scattered over the pages. Many of the lays evince a whimsical turn which would fairly entitle them to be categorized as nonsense verse pure and simple. Scribner's Sons have just brought out a third volume of poems by Henry Van Dyke, under the title "Music and Other Poems." The ode on "Music" is placed first, and is the longest and, perhaps, the most important in the book. Though "God of the Open Air" is almost equally ambitious. Besides odes, this collection also contains sonnets, legends, lyrics, and "greetings and inscriptions," representing the best of Mr. Van Dyke's recent work. The book is tastefully printed.

New Verse.

Twenty-four poems of the old South, by Miss Howard Weeden, written for the most part, in negro dialect, are published by Doubleday, Page & Co. in a small volume entitled "Old Voices" (Bell Book and Stationery Company). The title would imply, the author's point of view is that of regretful affection for "everything that long ago look wung." The poems are of even merit, are simple, natural, with a frequent appeal to the heart, and often with a dash of humor. For instance, there is the poem called "Old Mistle Way," in which an ancient dicker of the very old school laments the modern make of speed in everything. It was very different in the old days, he says, "for 'twas manners to be fast when me an' Mis' was boys." Each of the poems in dialect is accompanied by a portrait by the author of some negro selected as typical of the sentiments expressed. In addition to the portraits, there are elaborate borders and decorations by Cora Parker. The book is printed on heavy cream paper, and is prettily gotten up throughout.

Will Carleton's well-known poem, "Over the Hill to the Poor-House," with its companion poem, or sequel, "Over the Hill From the Poor-House," is reprinted by the Harpers in a handsome holiday edition (Bell Book and Stationery Company). The impression that these two

Buffet Luncheon.

The Christmas tree idea was carried out at a recent buffet luncheon in a very staid house with icicles dripping from the eaves and red lights in the windows. In a circle around the house were small cedar trees, laden with candy, sugar-plums in flowers and fruit forms. Across the length of the table went a double row of tiny trees hung with what looked like sugar-plums. Near the edge of the table stood a small sleigh driven by Santa, with his pack on his back and driven by toy reindeer. When the guests were seated, the hostess gave the signal, and the tiny trees became ablaze with electric lights of different colors.

NEW DECORATIONS.

For those who are seeking new ideas in decoration there are swinging bouquets to take the place of baskets and pockets to hang in doorways and arches. They are flowers arranged in loose design, preserving a round shape, and are tied with soft ribbons, gauze or tulle. Where the bouquets have several varieties of flowers in different colors. Dresden ribbons are used with pleasing effect. Only flowers like chrysanthemums, asters, roses, carnations and other flowers that stay fresh a long time can be used in these swinging bouquets.

Queries and Answers

Query—Why is the Christmas holiday frequently alluded to as the "Yuletide?"

Answer—Because the Christmas festival is kept during the time when the feast of Yule, the feast of the winter solstice, was held by the Saxons. That feast began with what is now our Christmas Eve, when in Saxon households a great log was drawn in with much ceremonial and laid across the hearth. Then the Yule fire was kindled and the feast, which lasted until New Year, was ushered in amidst much merry-making and carousing.

Query—From what is the play, "Merely Mary Ann," in which Eleanor Robson has been starting, taken?

Answer—From a book of the same title written by J. Zangwill, the famous Jewish writer and novelist.

Query—When does Ash Wednesday fall in 1905, and what will be the date of Easter?

Answer—Ash Wednesday falls on March 16, 1905. Easter Sunday will be April 23d.

Query—I met a young gentleman at the house of a friend who introduced him to me. Two days afterward he wrote and asked me to accompany him to the theatre. He has never called to thank me at home. Should I accept his invitation?

Answer—All such questions depend for answer largely upon modifying circumstances, and the good sense and judgment of the parties concerned. Ordinarily, a young man should call on a young lady before asking her to go out with him.

Query—I have some excellent mahogany chairs that need upholstering. My parlor is papered in blue and my carpet is blue and tan. What material and what color would be best for covering?

Answer—Brocade, in blue and old gold or blue and pink, would be pretty. Or if you have one or two covered in pink and old gold and the others in blue, the effect would still be cheery and appropriate.

Query—What is the most appropriate material for a debutante's gown? Should one designed for evening wear be cut high or low in the neck?

Answer—Nothing is so tricky and so subtle as a debutante's gown. A chiffon crepe de chine or batiste. Make it with a full tucked or skirted skirt and a baby waist, with short sleeves, and a bertha of some of the prettiest soft lace that are now so much worn.

Query—What is the best and easiest method of cleaning soiled matting?

Answer—Use warm water, with a strong solution of soft soap, and brush the matting carefully, using a little meal for rubbing spots or discolorations. Wipe off the soap and dry the matting with a cloth, and the sun and air may assist in the work of renovation.

Query—What is your experience with stains in the doing up of lace curtains? I have trouble in getting mine properly done, and am considering the purchase of stretchers. Will you help me, if you can?

Answer—I have stretchers and feel that I cannot do without them. After the curtains are stretched and put at once in the frames. These are set in the sun and the curtains are soon dry without further trouble or marionation. I find the stretchers invaluable.

Query—I have a friend, a gentleman, with whom I have been corresponding. He has not answered my last letter. Should I write to him again?

Answer—By no means, unless you are convinced that your letter has miscarried. Even then it would be advisable for you to wait. If your friend wishes to continue the correspondence, you will be certain to hear from him.

Query—What do you consider the prettiest house and table decorations for a Christmas party?

Answer—Holly, mistletoe and running cedar, or pine. If these are judiciously and tastefully placed, and if the room is decorated with red candles in silver of gilt candelabra, there is nothing prettier or more suitable for the season.

HINTS TO HOUSEWIVES.

I declare 'twould make you hungry just to hear that little woman
Talk of sweetbreads a la Maccodine and a la Flamencio,
Or salmon with Perigueux sauce, and just the proper way to toss
An omelet into golden floss—
Delectable as rare.

Her deeply learned articles in all the household magazines
Betrayed a knowledge wonderful of Gouffie and of Blot.
She Savarin and Soyer knew, Carême, and Lechard, Canivet, too;
Until the firm conviction grew:
No more could woman know.

I dropped in there at dinner time, with thoughts that fled from Bouillabaisse
To capons served a la Godard, Vancherin and Chaurousse;
But, being unexpected, I put epicurean longings by—
A plebeian dish like beefsteak pie
I would not even refuse.

I declare 'twould make you hungry just to hear that little woman
Talk of turkey, stuffed with truffles as we went to dinner down,
Canned corned beef was what she gave us Baker's bread—my Heaven save us
From another visit to her
When her cook has gone to town!
Kate M. Cleary.

The Christmas Menu.

Oysters on the Half Shell.
Graham Wafers. Grated Horse Radish.
Quarted Lemon.
Mock Turtle Soup.
Finger Rolls. Small Pickled Cucumbers.
Chickadee. Celery.
Salt Almonds. Olives.
Roast Pig. Apple Sauce.
Baked Smithfield Ham.
Roast Turkey. Chestnut Dressing.
Cranberry Jelly.
Creamed White Potatoes.
Candied Sweet Potatoes.
French Peas. Rice Croquettes.
Sweetbread Pudding.
Plum Pudding. Brand Sauce.
Wine Jelly. Pineapple Ice.
Fruit Cake. Angela Pood. Pound Cake.
Malaga Grapes. Oranges. Apples.
Cheese Straws. Mints.
Black Coffee.

CHRISTMAS DRINKS.

Egg-Nog.

One dozen eggs, yolks and whites beaten separately and very light; twelve tablespoonfuls of powdered sugar; twelve tablespoonfuls of good brandy; one gill of

Jamaica rum and twelve glasses of cream.
Add the cream, sugar, brandy and rum by degrees to the yolks of the eggs after they are well-beaten. Last of all whip in the whites and let the mixture stand before serving twenty-four hours so that the liquors may be thoroughly blended. Put into egg-nog glasses, crown with cream whipped to a stiff froth and dusted with nutmeg.

Apple Toddy.

One gallon apple brandy, one quart of French brandy, one quart of Jamaica rum. Bake one dozen and a half red apples; mash them, and pour on them one gallon and a half of boiling water; strain out the apples and sweeten the liquor with one cup one-half pound of sugar; add the brandy and rum and a few cloves and allspice. Pour in a demijohn cork tight and keep until needed. Roast half a dozen apples whole and put them in the bottom of the bowl when the todody is served.

MRS. C. C. M'PHAIL.

Baked Ham.

Select a firm, nicely cured country ham. Soak it in clear water for six hours. Take out of the water, wash carefully, put in a boiler with cold water, and boil slowly until it is tender. Take it out of the boiler, remove the skin and trim with a sharp knife into proper shape. Put it in a baking pan with enough gravy to keep it from burning. Dust it well with cracker crumbs and slick a number of whole cloves at intervals over its surface. Put in a moderate oven and brown, basting it every few moments with a syrup made of loaf sugar and French brandy, which, if properly applied, will thoroughly coat the ham and, with the spice, impart to it a delicious flavor. When it is evenly and delicately browned, place on a ham platter, garnish with parsley and send to the table.

Ideas From the Florists.

The florists' shops are fascinating places these days with their polkaets, their American Beauties, their Liberty roses, their hamothed their Jerusalem cherries, their crimson carnations and their wealth of Christmas greenery for house decoration during the Christmas season. The wreaths of holly, mistletoe and scarlet immortelles are tied with yards upon yards of scarlet ribbon, and are as bright and cheery as they can be. Something new and very effective for Christmas entertainments is shown in the shape of immense balls or globes made of silk raffle ribbon, which looks very much like satin ribbon and shows light shining through it in soft glowing fashion; that is, quite like a globe of light. It is placed within these balls which may be swung wherever fancy or taste indicates. The balls are usually decorated with a spray of flowers tied with ribbon. The Christmas colors are red, white and green and nothing is prettier against the vivid flame of holly and polkaets.

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THE CHRISTMAS MAID AND THE MISTLETOE

To "the bright face of danger," especially where the mistletoe hangs high up in the air, Who wouldn't a challenge at such a time dare, As it swings away like a true roundelay, Tempting a man, suggesting a way, Don Cupid never made a better snare Than that twig of mistletoe hanging up there.

—Estelle Foreman.

weaver, as she, too, once stood under the mistletoe.
Her brocade gown was looped back over a satin petticoat, originally white but mellowed by time into a rich ivory tint, and trimmed with two frounces of lace. The sleeves of the low cut bodice were short and finished with a fringed gimp of the prevailing soft, red color of the brocade.

The stomacher has graduated bows of ribbon, and the fine lawn undersleeves rejoice in lace ruffles to correspond with the falling band or collar. The skirt of the gown is quite long in the back and is looped at the hips with knots of ribbon; it is laid in plaits around the waist and sewed to the bodice which is fitted close to the figure. The waving hair of the maiden is drawn softly back from the face, and two loose curls fall from the knot down on the shoulders for the further embellishing of a man's fancy, if not to his absolute undoing.

Among the many beautiful and priceless colonial relics that make Brandon, the home of the Harrison or James River one of the most interesting spots in the State, is a pink brocade gown, embroidered in a rosebud pattern which Evelyn Byrd, of Westover, a fair Virginia flower, who faded away and died early in the eighteenth century, wore to her last Christmas ball at Williamsburg, where she went, and was so lovely in it that her image has always lingered as something rare and fine in the minds of those to whom her name and her beauty's fame has been revealed. One can picture her in the dance, as she glided through the stately minuet! One can almost catch the gleam of her laughing eye and see the smile parting her red lips, and one feels glad to know the glamor of her loveliness, know no fading, that she must always remain as unfading image of youth and joy as she faded then and thus beneath the mistletoe.

Another little Virginia Christmas maiden, who, like Evelyn Byrd, has remained eternally young and fair because of her early death was Sally Cary Fairfax, who, when she was sixteen, opened the Christmas ball at Alexandria, Va., with no less a person than George Washington, whom she has naively called "My Dear General," and where she went, according to her own quaintly worded story, gown in white patent inwrought with pink roses and green leaves, white satin slippers, a white lace fan and one pink rose in the ripples of her sunny hair beneath her sun-like ear.
Back and forth curtsying and bowing one, is informed, little Sally Cary Fairfax and her gallant partner passed and recessed in that Christmas ball of the long ago. The lights in the ball room have long since been put out, the music is hushed mute and the turf has grown green on the graves of the little Christmas maid and her "Dear General" for many years. But the Christmas maid of 1804 remembers them both in loving tender fashion as she turns from the mirror to welcome her cavalier who sees and greets her standing beneath the mistletoe.

SNAP DRAGON.

The Christmas dinner is nearly over, when the children, scanning toward the door, give a cheer. "Snap Dragon! Snap Dragon!" they shout.
Holding high a large, flat dish, her head turned away, comes the maid. She quickly lowers the dish to the middle of the table and each of the party immediately makes a long arm for its contents. No time for ceremony, for it is now all ablaze burning with the bewitching blue lambent flames, which soon pass away. Amid much merriment the family fingers get to and fro. No spoon or fork. The child, dancing about the dish. What is it they are snatching from the burning and snatching so quickly into their hands? Empty raised steels in the dance and light as the dish is brought in to the room. It takes its name from the practice of snatching at the tails of the little Christmas maid and her "Dear General" for many years. But the Christmas maid of 1804 remembers them both in loving tender fashion as she turns from the mirror to welcome her cavalier who sees and greets her standing beneath the mistletoe.
—Frances A. Smith.



STYLISH FUR COATS.